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## Mundaring and Hills Historical Society

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### Blackboy Hill

The Australian Imperial Force (AIF) was raised after the declaration of the First World War in early August 1914. An initial promise of 20,000 troops (one full division) was offered to the British government. Within four days across Australia, this number had come forward to volunteer. The Commonwealth Government hurriedly selected and took possession of Blackboy Hill as the main training camp for Western Australia. The site was 25 kilometres east of Perth, on a low hill at the foot of the Darling Scarp and named Blackboy Hill after the profusion of Western Australian grass trees that grew there.

Blackboy Hill Training Camp was the birthplace of Western Australia's Battalions. In the initial draft Western Australia also supplied the 3rd Field Artillery Brigade, 3rd Field Company Engineers and 3rd Field Ambulance. Blackboy Hill Camp was officially started on August 17, 1914. The Camp was on 62 acres



*Erecting tents on Blackboy Hill.*

of land, originally part of Governor Sir James Stirling's extensive 'Woodbridge' property.

The site was serviceable as it was alongside the railway line but the nearest railway platform, Bellevue Station, was about 700m west of the camp. The first men marched to a bleak and wet campsite and erected bell tents with 16 men per tent and were each issued a groundsheet and two army blankets. By midday on 19 August there were 1,173 men under canvas, just 200 short of the WA quota.

The initial Australian standards for enlistment were a minimum height of 5 feet 6 inches and a chest measurement of 34 inches with age limits between 19 and 34 years old. The urgent need for reinforcements from 1916 meant the standards were later eased, the minimum height limit was lowered to 5 feet 2 inches and the age was increased to 44 years old.

Daily food consumption of the soldiers at Blackboy Hill by 27th August 1914 (10 days after the camp opened):

- A ton of meat
- A ton of bread
- 800 pounds of mixed vegetables
- 1400 pounds of potatoes
- 700 ounces of salt
- 4 ½ bags of sugar
- 50 pounds of tea
- 50 pounds of coffee

**General Meeting to be held:**

**Boya Community Centre, 135 Scott Street, Boya**  
**Guest Speaker: Merv Beacham | "Rueben Beacham – A Life Cut Short" . Afternoon Tea served for a gold coin donation**